

**PUBLIC MEETING
December 14, 2010
MINUTES**

Chairman Mike Murray called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.

Commissioner Derek Brown and Commissioner Andy Hunthausen were present.

Others attending all or a portion of the meeting included Eric Bryson, K. Paul Stahl, Kelly Blake, Carrie Severson, Paul Putz, Nancy Everson, Rocky Infanger, Bonnie Jo Young, Art Thompson, William & Pamela Dooley, Al & Cindy Sawyer, Kenneth Root, Sharon LaFaver, Ralph Elrod, Rod Boboth, Tom Samec, Sandy Stenson, Pat Pardis, Chris Goodman, Lily Yamamoto, Alan Milliron, Chris & Ron Odegard, Mike Cleek, Laverna Watson, John Harmon, Robert Radcliffe, Sam & Cindy Humphrey, Anna Hoffman, Corkey & Retha Whempner, Leo Dutton, Dave Rau, George Cruickshank, Robert Kinyon, Duncan Adams, Peter Glowacki, Jeffrey Stoltz, Dave Fradette, Joe Visser, Brock Harris, and Rita Cortright, Recording Secretary.

Pledge of Allegiance. Everyone recited the Pledge.

Consent Action Items. (Eric Bryson)

- a. Resolution 2010-345 Declaring County Property Surplus Property. (Amy Reeves)
- b. Resolution 2010-346 Ordering a Refund of Taxes/Fees/Assessments Paid by John A. & Kathleen J. Bobinski in the Amount of \$625.55. (Cheryl Green)
- c. Resolution 2010-347 Ordering a Refund of Taxes/Fees/Assessments Paid by Julie M. Abrahamsen in the Amount of \$151.69. (Cheryl Green)
- d. Resolution 2010-348 Ordering a Refund of Taxes/Fees/Assessments Paid by Richard P. Osterloth in the Amount of \$7.22. (Cheryl Green)
- e. Resolution 2010-349 Ordering a Refund of Taxes/Fees/Assessments Paid by Linda Rossi in the Amount of \$144.47. (Cheryl Green)
- f. National Park Service "Preserve America" Program Grant Application for the Montana Community Revitalization Project: Heritage Planning for the New Decade in the Amount of \$24,976. (Paul Putz)

Eric Bryson reported on the consent action items and recommended approval.

No public comments were received.

Commissioner Hunthausen moved approval of the consent action items and authorized the Chair to sign. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0.

Break - Sheriff Leo Dutton, Undersheriff Dave Rau, and Captain Cruickshank introduced the new deputies in the patrol division, Robert Kinyon, Duncan Adams, Peter Glowacki, Jeffrey Stoltz. Captain Dave Fradette introduced the new detention officers, Joe Visser, Brock Harris. The Commissioners presented them with county pins.

Public Hearing. Requested Rate Increase for the Wolf Creek/Craig Fire Service Area.
(Carrie Severson)

Carrie Severson reported that the rate hearing had been requested by the Board of Trustees for the Wolf Creek/Craig Fire Service Area. The approximate assessment would be \$80,000. The fees would be based upon a range, the first tier starts at \$95 for an improvement or structure, up to the maximum amount of \$335. Real and personal property assessments, which include mobile homes and outbuildings, were based upon the taxable value of the structure or improvement. Any assessment changes would not be made until tax year 2011. Since 1996 when the district was created there have been no rate increases.

Rocky Infanger, Fire Chief, Wolf Creek/Craig Fire Service Area, presented data on in-house training for volunteers and call volumes since year 2003. The needs of the fire service area as it pertained to the increased fee request were reviewed. The power point presentation showed the equipment inventory and age of fire trucks. The equipment is divided between the fire stations in Wolf Creek, Craig and Holter. The current flat fee of \$55 is not sufficient to make ends meet; the district would like to upgrade their fire apparatus and possibly put in a station at Holter Lake. The fire service area covers in excess of 450 square miles, or approximately 330,000 acres. Rocky continued with background knowledge on formation of the districts and ownership of properties and equipment. The district is a 501(c) 4 entity.

Deputy County Attorney Paul Stahl explained that fire service areas and fire districts are governmental entities that were created by the County Commissioners and they are the only entities that can tax people for fire. The organizational structure was outlined.

Chris Goodman, 2720 Craig River Road, Trustee and Secretary. Supported the proposed fee increase due to significant development of residential and recreational homes in this area. This growth has made an increased demand on the Fire Service Area's resources. The Craig School has been designated as the new Fire Training Center. Ten percent of the resort tax will go towards maintenance and upgrade of the facility. Increased fuel and utility costs have also contributed to the need for a fee increase.

Bonnie Jo Young, Board Chair and Treasurer, Wolf Creek/Craig Fire Service Area. Supported the proposed budget petitioning the fee increase and responded to written comments that were submitted. They have applied for grants to help support the FSA. It costs \$7,000 to outfit one firefighter. Firefighters answer medical calls, fire calls, wildland calls, structural calls, and it takes specialized equipment for each type of emergency. The coordination between FSA and the fire companies was explained. The fire service area pays for infrastructure, including utilities, insurance, phones and pagers, education and training of both departments. Some money would be set aside in anticipation of replacing aging vehicles. Board meetings are open to the public on the second Thursday of every month at the Craig Training Center.

Ralph Elrod, Wolf Creek Trustee. Supported the fee increase.

Break – 5 minutes

Ms. Severson reviewed how the number of properties was assessed. The information comes from the tax system from the Department of Revenue and is based on the taxable value of improvements.

Eric Bryson stated that tax collection in Craig started September 15. The total tax collection through October 31 was \$8,229.80. Ten percent of the resort tax revenue (\$822.99) can only be used for maintenance of the Craig Training Center for a period of 20 years,

Public hearing -

Corkey Whempner, 1775 Beartooth Road, Wolf Creek. Appreciated the hard work of the fire department but protested the tax structure. There are many camp trailers on properties that should be taxed and they are not. A fire station should be closer to where the structures are.

Dr. Pat Pardis. Protested the way this fee is collected.

Cathleen Wilson, Simms. Formerly owned Evergreen Cabins. Against the tax increase. Since the resort burned down she has little income.

Kenneth Root, 328 2nd Ave. South, Lewistown. Owns property at 2801 Gladstone Creek Road near Wolf Creek. Somewhat opposes the fee, too high. He would like to know the fire department response time.

Sharon LaFavre, 2185 Little Wolf Creek Road, office at 160 Craig Main Street. More funding is needed for the fire service area to continue to provide excellent service. The concern is that the incremental fee increase was not fair and equitable to the landowners in the district. The fee is based solely on the structures when some people have a lot of land that may have a wildfire.

Cindy Humphrey, Wolf Creek. In favor of the increase but has some reservations on the amount of increase.

Rocky Infanger. Supported the fee increase. Response call information is available by contacting the fire department. He responded to the negative written comments and explained the 911 protocol. The response time to 2802 Glasgow Creek would probably be 25-30 minutes. He talked about the difference between responding to a wildland fire versus a structure fire.

Commissioner Brown moved that the written comment period be left open until 5 p.m. Friday. Commissioner Hunthausen seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0.

Commissioner Hunthausen moved to render a decision next Tuesday at the regular scheduled meeting. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0.

Public comments on any public matter within the jurisdiction of the Commission that is not on the agenda above. None.

There was no other business, the meeting adjourned at 11:22 a.m.

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Michael A. Murray, Chairman

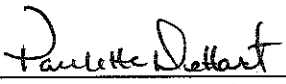


Derek Brown



Andy Hunthausen

ATTEST:



Paulette DeHart, Clerk of the Board